

GOAL BONANZA FOR WANDERERS AT LOWER MEAD

Wealdstone 1, Wycombe Wanderers 6

WYCOMBE WANDERS gave the first real insight of things to come this season, when they utterly decimated Wealdstone on their own Lower Mead ground in the second half of Tuesday evening's Isthmian League rout. They improved several times over on their showing before the interval, following a dressing room talk from manager, Brian Lee.

Although holding out for 41 minutes, the Stones then copped everything Walthamstow had somehow managed to avoid the previous Saturday.

But they were hardly unsuspecting victims. For they must have gathered an inkling of their possible plight long before the goal rush started.

SEARLE'S RETURN

Returning to former haunts, Keith Searle was always active in front of the home net, where ex-Corinthian Casuals goalkeeper, Chris Swain, did everything anyone could have expected of him to keep the Wanderers' attack at bay.

Wycombe had no surprises in their line up. Pritchard — Saturday's substitute — won a place in his own right and Barry Baker took over in midfield with injuries ruling out both Horseman and Hartridge.

Neither did anything but good, Pritchard in particular adopting such a direct style of attack, that a sagging Wealdstone were virtually at his mercy for the second period.

But then, Tuesday's was an all round team performance; altogether too much after half time for the Stones to deal with. An essentially new side assembled by coach, Alan Humphries in pre-season, had individuals to fear, without the teamwork to back them.

Former Wycombe wingman, Len Worley spent 45 frustrating minutes taking equal honours with his one-time teammate, left back Charlie Gale, but faded under the Wanderers' second-half blitz.

INJURY

Injured early in the game, Bob McRae, who spent some time training at Bisham Abbey alongside Brian Lee's squad, was no particular threat, although, little Johnny Wilson and big John Ritchie, wearing 8 and 9 respectively, did test the visiting defence at times.

And, happily, that allowed

Wycombe goalkeeper, John Maskell to tune in to proceedings far more efficiently than against Walthamstow. His handling — except for one incident late in the evening — could not be faulted.

As on Saturday, Wycombe took almost the entire first half to open their account. But, after 41 minutes, Geoff Anthony ran the ball up the right touchline before sending it low into the centre for Keith Searle to push home.

Wealdstone, mostly attempting to poach a score on the goal-line, answered with one of their few really clean raids a minute from the interval. A typical Worley-cross, seen so often at Loakes Park in the past was met by McRae's header, which Maskell took well.

Before Maskell was brought into play again — ten minutes into the new half — Wanderers had already bounded into a three goal lead.

LARRY SOLO

Larry Pritchard went solo to carry a 48th minute attack through the home defence himself and shoot first time for number two. Then another ex-Wealdstone favourite, Johnny Hutchinson, settled the points by, driving the ball straight under Swain's diving body.

As Casuals' "Aunt Sally" last season, Swain must be well used to mammoth scorelines going against him, as again happened on Tuesday.

Wealdstone pulled off the limping McRae in the 58th minute, replacing him with Merv Smith, a signing from Hitchin who made little or no difference either way to their play.

Although beating three men, Searle saw one of the best moves of the match deflected for a corner, but Geoff Anthony put in a 20-yard shot for the fourth goal as Wealdstone unsuccessfully tried to spring an offside trap, after 61 minutes.

The home forwards came out worst in several 50-50 affairs while heading for the Wycombe area during the match, and still hadn't replied when 12 minutes later Keith Blunt slammed over a pin-point cross for John Delaney to head home.

With only 17 minutes for Wealdstone to pull anything out of the fire, substitute Smith loosed a scorching 80th minute volley which Maskell found too hot to handle, and Wycombe were somewhat lucky to remain unscathed.

REWARD

Sixty seconds later, though, Wealdstone reaped their reward as John Draper cannoned the ball into goal from a distance to make it 5-1.

Still Wanderers were the team on top and a Larry Pritchard free kick found its way rather tamely into goal six minutes from time as everyone let the ball roll unchecked. M.W.

WEALDSTONE: C. Swain; T. Mahon, J. Booth; W. Thompson, A. Dafforn, J. Draper; L. Worley, J. Wilson, J. Ritchie, R. McRae (sub: M. Smith, 58 minutes), P. Somers.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: J. Maskell; K. Blunt, C. Gale; E. Powell, J. Delaney, B. Baker, G. Anthony, L. Pritchard, K. Searle, B. Bremer, J. Hutchinson. Sub: I. Rundle (not used).

REFEREE: Mr. L. Leonard (Luton).